

Message Text

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51

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-02 NEA-10 OMB-01 AID-20 INRE-00

SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

RSC-01 DODE-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SPC-03 SS-20 L-03 DRC-01

(ISO) W

----- 014968

O R 191910Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2520

INFO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 1565

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GT

SUBJECT: CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS ASK EMBASSY HELP TO STOP THREATS
AGAINST THEM

1. SUMMARY: DANILO BARILLAS, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF CHRISTIAN
DEMOCRATIC PARTY, ASKS EMBASSY TO TAKE WHATEVER STEPS IT
CONSIDERS APPROPRIATE TO GET THE GOG TO STOP
THREATENING TO KILL FRONT LEADERS IF THEY DO NOT DISCONTINUE
THEIR PUBLIC OPPOSITION. END SUMMARY.

2. WE MET WITH DANILO BARILLAS, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF
THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY, THIS AFTERNOON (MARCH 18)
AT HIS "URGENT" REQUEST. BARILLAS BEGAN BY SAYING THAT
HIS PEOPLE WERE NOW FACED WITH DECISION AS TO
WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN NEW CONGRESS JUST
ELECTED. THEY ARE OF A MIND TO DO SO DESPITE FACT THAT THEY
WERE ROBBED OF PRESIDENTIAL VICTORY AND THE PROBABILITY
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THAT BY THE TIME THE GOG GETS THROUGH RIGGING THE CONGRESSIONAL

VOTE COUNT, THEY WILL RECEIVE ONLY ABOUT 16-20 OF THE 38 SEATS THEY FIGURE THEY WON. HOWEVER, THEY DO NOT BELIEVE THEY CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE NEW CONGRESS UNLESS THEY ARE FREE TO CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN THAT THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WAS A FRAUD. BUT THEY FEAR FOR THEIR LIVES IF THEY CONTINUE TO RAISE A FUSS. BARILLAS SAID THAT MARIO SANDOVAL, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS AND VICE-PRESIDENT ELECT OF GUATEMALA, HAD PRIVATELY THREATENED CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADER RENE DE LEON SCHLOTTER WITH DEATH LAST WEEK IF HIS PEOPLE DIDN'T STOP BEING A NUISANCE IN THE CONGRESS; THAT CONGRESSIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT HECTOR ANDRADE HAD MADE SIMILAR THREATS IN FRONT OF OTHER CONGRESSMEN; THAT MLN DEPUTY DAVID VEGA HAD THREATENED HIM PERSONALLY; AND THAT THEY HAD RECEIVED A NUMBER OF INDIRECT THREATS, INCLUDING ADVICE FROM FRIENDLY ELEMENTS WITHIN THE ARMY, TO "BE CAREFUL."

3. BARILLAS SAID THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT BE CONVINCED TO GIVE ASSURANCES THAT OPPOSITION CONGRESSMEN WOULD NOT BE KILLED SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY ACT LIKE AN OPPOSITION, THEN THEY WOULD HAVE TO STAY OUT OF THE CONGRESS, AND GUATEMALA WOULD TAKE ON THE APPEARANCES OF ANOTHER NICARAGUA. BARILLAS SAID THAT HE BELIEVED DEMOCRACY AND GUATEMALA'S POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT BE SERVED BY SUCH A COURSE OF EVENTS WHICH COULD LEAD TO A NEW SPIRAL OF TERROR AND COUNTER-TERROR. HE WAS THEREFORE ASKING THE U.S. EMBASSY, AS WELL AS SEVERAL OTHER DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS (WE BELIEVE THE PAPAL NUNCIATURE IS ONE) AND OTHER INTERESTED ENTITIES, INCLUDING FRIENDLY ELEMENTS WITHIN THE ARMY, TO DO WHAT THEY COULD TO INFLUENCE THE GOVERNMENT TO STOP ITS TACTIC OF SEEKING TO MUZZLE THE OPPOSITION BY THREATS.

4. WE TOLD BARILLAS THAT WHILE WE COULD NOT INTERVENE IN GUATEMALA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS IN THE MANNER HE WANTED US TO DO, OUR POSITION AGAINST POLITICAL VIOLENCE WAS WELL KNOWN AND WE WOULD CONTINUE TO EXPRESS IT WHENEVER APPROPRIATE OCCASIONS AROSE. IN WHAT SEEMED TO BE AN ATTEMPT TO SPUR US TO GREATER ACTION, BARILLAS ASSERTED THAT THERE ARE A NUMBER OF STORIES GOING

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AROUND TO THE EFFECT THAT THE U.S. EMBASSY HAD GIVEN ITS SPECIFIC APPROVAL (BENEPLACITO) TO THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE GOG IN THE FIRST DAYS FOLLOWING THE MARCH 3 ELECTIONS. HE QUICKLY ADDED THAT HE KNOW THIS WAS NOT TRUE, BUT ASSERTED THAT THERE WERE MANY WHO BELIEVED OTHERWISE.

5. COMMENT: WE DO NOT PLAN TO MAKE ANY SPECIFIC

DEMARCHES TO GOG OFFICIALS AS A RESULT OF BARILLAS'
REQUEST, BUT WILL MENTION IT AND OUR ATTITUDE ON
VIOLENCE AS APPROPRIATE OCCASIONS ARISE.
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